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Answering Prayers (Miracles of Saint Joseph the Hesychast)



Geronda truly shone forth in the monastic and spiritual struggle, and he became a light to those in darkness. This is evident from the deep reverence people have for him. They invoke his prayers and receive great help. Geronda works many signs and miracles. Many people see him, are helped by him, and feel great consolation from his presence. Especially here in North America, there are many people with strong faith in Elder Joseph. “According to your faith be it unto you,”[1] Christ said.

A physician in Ohio with great faith in the sanctity of Elder Joseph told us the following incidents in which he was helped by his prayers:

One of my first encounters with Papou1 Joseph’s miracle- working powers occurred when I was operating on a lady for a complete small bowel obstruction which required immediate surgery. She had previously had one or two surgeries, but nothing very critical, so we did not expect what we found.
When the operation began, I encountered massive adhesions precluding access to the area of obstruction. After struggling for four hours, I was still unable to reach the obstruction. Frustration and fatigue began to set in. It was impossible to distinguish the intestinal wall from the scar tissue and adhesions. As a result, I had

acciden-tally cut into the intestinal lumen three times. Even worse, we could not close those openings; we would have to re-sect them and reconnect the intestine. And I still hadn’t reached the area of obstruction.

At this point I feared that I would not be able to close those openings securely, and this would jeopardize the patient’s very life. In this predicament, I wasn’t sure where to make the next cut, so I broke scrub to get a breather.

At this point in my life I did not know very much about Papou Joseph and had seen his classic picture only a few times briefly in passing. But as I sat in the surgeon’s locker room almost in tears because of this horrendous situa-tion I was in—I heard a voice in my mind telling me, “Cut to the right. As I heard this voice, immediately Papou Joseph’s picture came to mind as well, almost as if it were in front of me.

I didn t know what to make of this instruction, but since I hadn’t accomplished what I needed after six hours,

I decided to do what I felt God and Papou Joseph had told me. So I cut to the right of the intestines, even though I couldn’t tell what I was cutting, and soon came upon a clear space. From there I was able to find the obstruction and resect all areas of injured intestine and reconnect ev-erything. The patient did remarkably well and has never needed any further surgery since then. I remember that case as Papou Joseph s 8 /4-hour miracle!

In 1997 when our office practice was on the brink of bankruptcy and we were in danger of losing our office, it was suggested to me that I attend an all-night vigil in honor of Papou Joseph, on his name day in August. I went to our monastery in Saxonburg, Pennsylvania after work and stayed several hours and venerated Papou Joseph’s relics. From that day on, almost instantly our practice rebounded. We regained a solid financial position, and our office building was saved.

At the same time, we had a hard time renting the vacant office suite in our building, and we needed the rental income. Some time after that vigil, a respected organization found our available suite and expressed an interest. But since many others had also expressed an interest but then changed their mind, I was doubtful. I prayed to Papou Joseph for his help and promised that if we finally rented our suite, I would hang a framed photo of him in our central business office for all my patients to see every day as they came in. Sure enough, within thirty minutes I got the call that they decided to rent it, and they signed a five-year contract. The next day, Papou Joseph’s picture was on our walls!

One day our oldest girl tripped and sustained a severe stellate laceration over her

right eye, going through the eyebrow and deep down to the bone. We controlled the bleeding and brought the wound together with butterfly strips, but I was concerned how it would heal due to its complex nature. She was blessed with Papou Joseph's relics on her eye and it healed beautifully, despite not having stitches.

Since then, in my practice of general surgery there have been so many situations and difficult cases when Papou Joseph bailed me out that I cannot ever begin to recount them all.

Note:

[1] This physician refers to Elder Joseph using the word "Papou" (which is Greek for "grandfather") because because Elder Joseph was the spiritual father of his spiritual father

Source: Elder Efraim (of Arizona), My Elder: Joseph the Hesychast and Cave-dweller, Saint Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery, 2013, Arizona USA (www.stanthonysmonastery.org).

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